

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for at least partially dehydrating the casing of co-extruded food products, comprising the processing steps of:
supplying an aqueous salt solution to an exterior of the co-extruded food products,
collecting the aqueous salt solution used when supplying the aqueous salt solution to the exterior of the co-extruded food products,
reconditioning the collected aqueous salt solution ~~such that it comprises forced evaporation of water out of the aqueous salt solution, and~~
reusing the reconditioned aqueous salt solution when supplying the aqueous solution to the exterior of the co-extruded food products
wherein the aqueous salt solution is automatedly monitored by measuring the concentration of a specific substance of the collected aqueous salt solution;
and wherein the quality of the aqueous salt solution is automatedly adjusted by an intelligent control unit.

2. (cancelled)

3. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the collected aqueous salt solution is filtered.

4. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 3, characterized in that the collected aqueous salt solution is filtered in a manner such that at least one component is substantially removed from the aqueous salt solution by means of absorption.

5. (cancelled)

6. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~claim 1~~ any of the foregoing claims, characterized in that an additive is added to the aqueous salt solution ~~before reconditioning the collected aqueous salt solution~~ so as to prevent discolouration.

7. (currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~claim 1~~ any of the foregoing claims, characterized in that an additive is added to the aqueous salt solution ~~after reconditioning the collected aqueous salt solution~~ so as to at least partially reverse discolouration.

8. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 6 or 7, characterized in that the additive comprises a strong oxidant, such as hydrogen peroxide ~~as a salt derivative of a strong oxidant~~.

9. (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that the strong oxidant consists of a salt derivative of a strong oxidant, such as sodium percarbonate.

10. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that the strong oxidant consists of an acid derivative.

11. (previously presented) The method as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, characterized in that the aqueous salt solution is irradiated in order to at least substantially prevent discolouration thereof.

12. (previously presented) The method as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, characterized in that the aqueous salt solution is irradiated in order to at least substantially reverse discolouration of the aqueous salt solution.

13. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 11 or 12, characterized in that the irradiation takes place by means of ultraviolet radiation.

14-17. (cancelled)